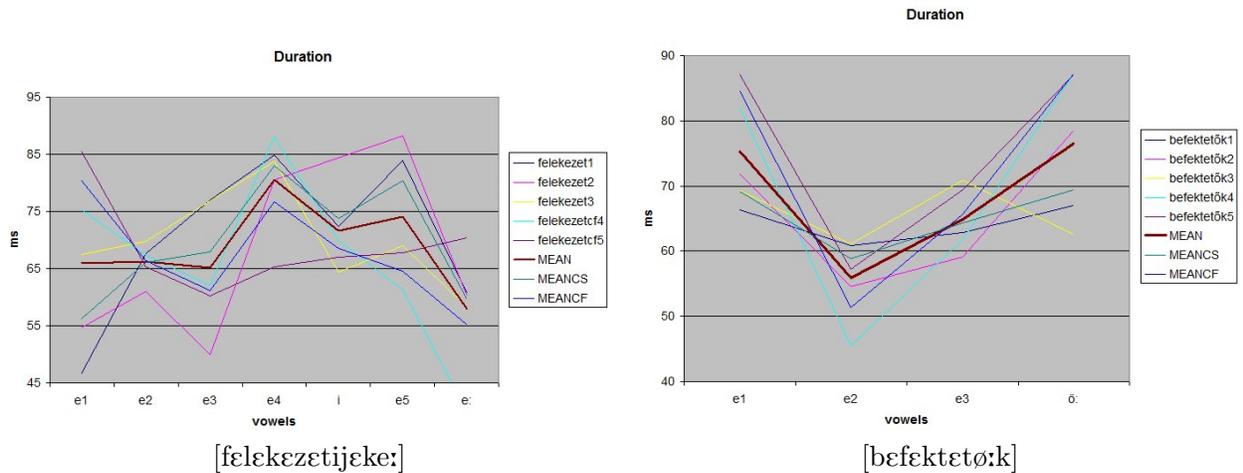


## (The non-existence of) secondary stress in Hungarian

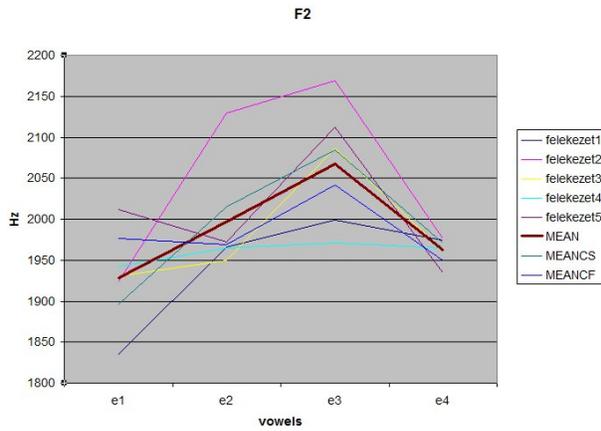
While it is generally accepted that Hungarian has initial primary stress, the secondary stress pattern of the language has been subject to considerable debate. The most widely cited view, originating from (Hayes 1995: 330), citing Kerek (1971), is that the language displays a very basic quantity-insensitive left-to-right trochaic foot assignment without quantity sensitivity and extrametricality, i.e., that secondary stress falls on every odd-numbered syllable. Conversely, Szinnyei (1912:12) argues for a quantity-sensitive pattern: according to him, secondary stress falls on the third and fifth syllable unless the third syllable is light, in which case secondary stress is on the fourth and sixth syllables. Finally, Hammond (1987) claims that there is a distinction between secondary and tertiary stress.

These views, however, lack both phonetic and phonological evidence to support them: the claims have been made without prior articulatory or acoustic measurements, and they also lack support from phonological processes like stress-sensitive vowel lengthening or shortening, or foot-initial strengthening or medial weakening of consonants. Moreover, an impressionistic survey of native speaker judgements raises doubts regarding all three accounts: speakers reject binary stress patterns regardless of quantity-sensitivity and the secondary-tertiary distinction.

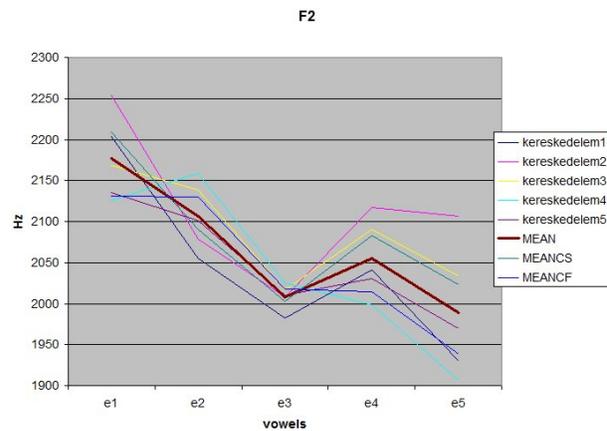
To test the claims above, a pilot study examining 4 native Hungarian speakers both in casual and in formal careful speech has been conducted. Of the 3 possible phonetic correlates of stress provided by Raphael et al. (2007: 232), F0, vowel duration and intensity, the first two appear to be irrelevant for non-primary stress in Hungarian. Vowel duration is only influenced by the lexical length contrast and local factors like following sonorants:



F0 is determined by the information structure of the sentence (supporting Varga 2002). Vowel reduction is sensitive to primary stress, but it does not seem to correlate with hypothetical secondary stress Hungarian (cf. Szeredi 2008):

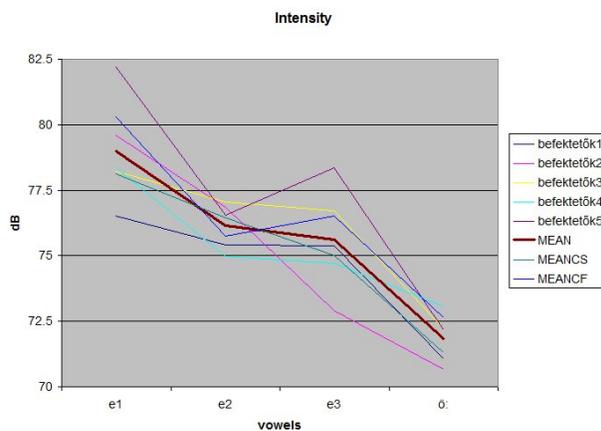


[felekezeti:ke:]

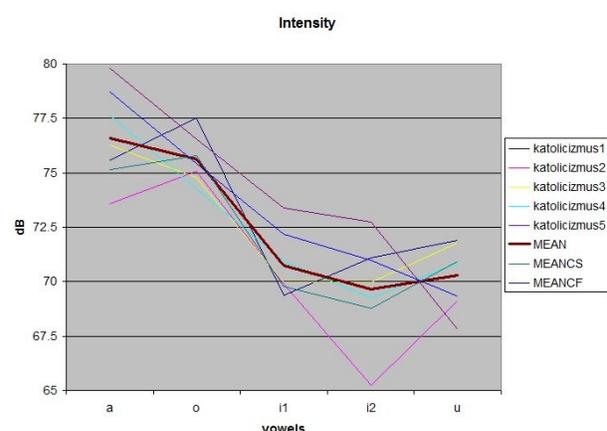


[kerεʃkedelem]

Therefore, we posit that vowel intensity is the main cue for hypothetical secondary stress in Hungarian. Our results indicate that intensity does not correlate with syllable weight. Eliminating influences of clause structure, words consisting entirely of light syllables usually do not have a secondary stress at all: the first syllable has the highest intensity and the intensity peaks on the following vowels decrease gradually.



[befektetok:k]



[kɒtolitsizmuʃ]

In sum, although more work is clearly needed to definitively describe the stress pattern of the language, our results indicate that there is no phonetic or phonological evidence for the wide-spread claim that Hungarian has secondary (or tertiary) stress.

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